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CAFOD

CAFOD MILLENNIUM LECTURE

"It's Time for Justice"

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1996 Nobel Peace Prize Winner

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TIME FOR JUSTICE

Faithfully he brings true justice; he will neither waver nor be crushed until true justice is established on earth, for the islands are awaiting his law. (Isaiah 42:2-4)

To have a desire for justice, and to be earnestly engaged in its promotion, is the responsibility of all who are concerned for human wellbeing, and who seek to be faithful to God's direction. The prophet looks forward to the time when true justice is established on the earth . This is the hope of every person of good will. It is the reason why I am here with you, and why you are here with me.

First of all I want to thank CAFOD for the invitation that has brought us here together, and to the British Government and people who have welcomed and supported my visit, and who have concerned themselves with East Timorese welfare. Of course I extend fraternal greetings in a special way to fellow members of the Catholic family, but I include in the embrace of my affection and esteem every person who longs for greater harmony within and between the nations of the earth, and every group that strives for it.

As the year 2000 draws closer no doubt we all share a renewed determination to improve human relations and advance human happiness. If the perfect fulfilment of this dream seems beyond us we must still be committed to its realisation, and have confidence that our efforts will bear good fruit in our midst - we must not waver in our endeavour. With this in mind it is surely most appropriate that CAFOD have chosen to focus their work in the years leading up to the third Millennium under the title - "A Time for Justice" - and I am sure that all of you share a similar vision for the future, for you are already engaged in a variety of practical measures with the same aim in view.

I wish to acknowledge the concern for the welfare of the East Timorese people that has been expressed by successive Governments of this country, and for the actions that have been taken on our behalf at various international forums. I have in mind especially the position that has been taken by the representatives of the United Kingdom in the United Nations Security Council, and in the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and in partnership with other members of the European Union. Also I am aware of the support that has, and is, being given by HM Government to the Tripartite Ministerial talks between Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the UN Secretary General, and to the All Inclusive Intra Timorese Dialogue. All these are of central importance in the achievement of *'a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution'* to the long lasting conflict over the disposition of my country - a conflict which has resulted in so much human suffering, loss of life, and waste or abuse of valuable resources of all kinds.

As you are aware the new UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has indicated his own commitment to a satisfactory resolution of this distressing state of affairs by his appointment of a special envoy Mr Jamsheed Marker to encourage positive progress in the necessary negotiations towards a settlement. We also look forward to benefiting in a practical way from the real concern already expressed verbally by Mr Robin Cook, now British Foreign Secretary. This occasion gives me the opportunity to thank all those other agencies - governmental, non-governmental, ecclesial - and those many small organisations and private individuals who have taken an interest in the plight of the East Timorese, and have worked on our behalf for the betterment of our situation. May I speak generally, to include all? We are grateful for the humanitarian aid you have provided; for the funding of a variety of social, developmental, and pastoral projects; for the communication of our particular difficulties to those who would otherwise have remained unknowing; and for the continued advocacy of our human rights as individuals and as a nation. We acknowledge the good will these persistent efforts demonstrate, indeed the courage and spirit of self-sacrifice they have betokened. We hope that you will all share in our own joy as our situation improves - as we hope and believe it surely will - if wisdom and charity come to bear upon it.

I speak, of course, as a member of the Christian family of faith, and as one afforded particular responsibility as Bishop in the local Catholic Community in East Timor. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching of His Church that I proclaim and to which I try to be faithful.

For me the model of humanity is the person of Jesus Christ. He exemplifies human nature at its noblest and best. It is His charity, His wisdom, His vision for the human family which is my inspiration. His words direct me in the path that leads to happiness. Furthermore I believe with the Church that He enables each and all of us to emulate Him, and that He lifts us up from our sorry state to a fuller and finer level of living. If we are open to the workings of His Spirit of love in our hearts and in our relationships we will experience a change for the better, and come to know in the present something more of the true justice we are awaiting and which we long for. This Gospel and this teaching requires that I defend and promote the precious and unique value of every human being, and contribute as best I can to the establishment and maintenance of a social order that respects and advances human dignity.

As I said to those who gathered at Oslo last December to honour me as joint recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize:

The duty given to the Church is not socio-political in nature but religious. It belongs to the Church, a wellspring of enlightenment and energy, to empower and contribute to the strengthening of human society ... (so) ... a Catholic Bishop cannot be indifferent when a people's possibilities for human realisation in all dimensions are not respected.

This brings me to the substance of this address. I am anxious that the people of East Timor are given every opportunity to make further progress as human beings, individually and socially. I seek your further support so that each and every Timorese may be assisted to fulfil his or her potential, and that as a people we can take our proper place in the family of nations. I ask only for the respect which is due to every person, and to every human society on earth.

For such progress to be made several things are necessary:

- It is essential for there to be an **authentic dialogue between all parties concerned**. In particular all shades of Timorese opinion, and all those individual Timorese whose leadership abilities are recognised by the people, should be involved in any discussion concerning our national future. If justice is to be true then the truth must be heard, as it is perceived and experienced, from all sides. This should include a consultation of the people of East Timor.

  No doubt there have been consultations of a sort in the past, but it is evident from the social unrest we suffer in our country that dissatisfaction with their conclusions persists. For a happier future it seems necessary that a more adequate testing of public opinion be undertaken.

  The United Nations, through the good offices of the Secretary General, has tried to promote dialogue, and the President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray - who heartened us by a personal visit to our country - laid great emphasis on its importance for any lasting solution:

  Believe in the power of dialogue, of dialogue among yourselves and of dialogue outside the country. Dialogue is difficult: it requires courage, patience, and determination. Dialogue requires mutual respect by all the parties. It requires giving a space to all to express their concerns. The way of dialogue is the most mature and the most human way, and it is the most effective way for producing solutions which satisfy all concerned.

  You will surely understand that it is difficult to enter into an open and truthful dialogue in an atmosphere where people are afraid to speak their minds. Intimidation prevails against mutual trust and honesty. There is nothing to be gained in the long term by such an approach which only generates resentment and resistance.

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The plain fact is that the heavy military presence in East Timor, far from contributing to a peaceful conclusion, is militating against it. This is particularly so when there are continual instances of the abuse of power by some military personnel, and when examples of physical and psychological abuse are all too frequent. For a proper and fruitful dialogue to proceed a pre-requisite is the drastic reduction, even complete withdrawal, of the armed forces.

When Pope John Paul II made a pastoral visit to Indonesia in 1989 he stressed that national unity is only achieved through **respect for human rights**:

At times nations are tempted to disregard fundamental human rights in a misguided search for political unity based on military or economic power alone. But such unity can easily be dissolved. (Jakarta 9.10.89)

In this regard may I also make an appeal to those who are involved in the communications media. We are so grateful to the members of this profession who have lent their voice and skill in making known to the world the anguish of the East Timorese people. I would like to pay particular tribute to those who have risked, and even lost, their lives in this attempt. At the same time may I try to convey how very important it is always to give the most accurate and balanced account of proceedings, statements, explanations and interviews. Sometimes the cause of peaceful resolution has been hindered by unwarranted or even mischievous interpretations, or by tendentious manipulations of what has in fact been said or done. If it is necessary that the truth be spoken, it is also very necessary that it be broadcast.

- A second essential is to have a **spirit of reconciliation.** As I pleaded in my speech at Oslo:

To make peace a reality we must be flexible as well as wise. We must truly recognise our own faults and move to change ourselves in the interests of making peace ... Let us banish anger and hostility, vengeance and other dark emotions, and transform ourselves into humble instruments of peace ... The people in East Timor are not uncompromising. They are not unwilling to forgive and overcome their bitterness. On the contrary they yearn for peace within their community, and within the region. They wish to build bridges with their Indonesian brothers and sisters. They wish to find ways of creating harmony and tolerance.

We must never preclude the possibility of good will on the part of others, even those who have brought suffering upon us. No human beings should be 'demonised'. And it is possible for any and all of us to pursue, or return to, nobler ways of acting; to live according to our highest ideals. We in East Timor cannot but recall the challenging words of the Holy Father in his homily at Tacitolu on the occasion of his pastoral visit to our homeland in 1989:

Your land is much in need of Christian healing and reconciliation. It is not always easy to find the courage, determination and patience needed for reconciliation. Yet we know in faith that love transcends every boundary between nations, peoples, and cultures. No matter what the differences, no matter what the grievances or injuries, we who are Christ's followers must take to heart his words: 'Forgive and you will be forgiven' (Lk 6:37) 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you' (Matt 5:44).

But Christ's call to reconciliation, re-iterated by the Pope in these words, does not require that we compromise or diminish our stand against injustice. To propose a reconciliation which did not attend to the realities of the moral disorder which has been, and continues to be perpetrated, would be a form of collusion with it. So it is absolutely necessary that an earnest effort is made to bring to an end the manifold abuse of human rights which persists in East Timor. Regrettably these abuses have by no means lessened - indeed, have even increased - in the months following the Nobel Prize award.

Therefore I say again, as I said on that occasion: ***'Stop the violence, stop the oppression, stop the bloodshed.'*** There is not true justice when the innocent still suffer, and when the violators of human dignity do so with seeming impunity.

Without doubt a real step towards reconciliation would be made by the release of East Timorese political prisoners, and for those practical proposals for peace which have already been advanced by East Timorese leaders at home and overseas to be given open-minded, and open-hearted, attention by all concerned.

- A third matter of great importance is that of the **development** of our country. I express once again my gratitude to all those agencies, governmental, non-governmental, and ecclesial - to groups and to individuals - who have in any way contributed towards the people of East Timor's emergence from age-old limitations into greater opportunity. I am sure you will agree with me that it is most important that the development which is undertaken is 'truly human' in character. Let me enlarge upon what I mean by this.

  In his Encyclical, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, (1987) the present Pope acknowledges the teaching of his predecessors from Leo XIII to Paul VI on fostering social progress, and, building on these foundations, he gives consideration to what is meant by authentic human development (Chapter IV).

  He clearly sees such an effort as in accordance with the will of God, a *'duty of all, towards all'. 'Every nation, or people',* he declares, *'has a right to its own full development, which has its purely economic and social aspects',* but *'should also include individual cultural identity, and openness to the transcendent'.*

  'Not even the need for development', he writes, *'can be used as an excuse for imposing on others one's own way of life or own religious belief'.* He goes on to say:

  Nor would a type of development which did not respect and promote human rights - personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples - be really worthy of man ..... There must be complete respect for the identity of each people, with its own historical and cultural characteristics ... And both peoples and individuals must enjoy the fundamental equality which is the basis of the right for all to share in the process of full development. (Para 33)

  It is in the context of the whole of this Encyclical that I would wish my remarks to be understood.

  In East Timor there is a great need of development because, despite the improvements which have been achieved, there is still widespread poverty, ill health, and unemployment. It is essential that programmes for development are arrived at by due consultation with the native people, who can best determine an order of needs, and that they play a responsible part in their execution. It is absolutely necessary that the first beneficiaries of development projects are these people themselves.

  East Timorese, whatever their persuasions and priorities, should be participants in the planning and in the fruits of every scheme. Skills that are necessary for such participation should be imparted as a priority so that there is self-sufficiency in as many respects as possible. There should not be a dependence upon the resources of teams of soldiers or upon the skills of other outsiders - whether these be migrants from other islands in the archipelago, or from further afield. Such dependency does not really contribute to the progress of the indigenous people, and it can leave them vulnerable to exploitation.

  It is important that the unique character of East Timorese society is preserved, indeed fostered, and that whatever immigration does take place should not be such as to threaten that identity or prevent the native people from bettering their circumstance, and always having the hope of still further improving the overall quality of their lives.

  I am anxious that our young people are offered education of such a kind that they can fully appreciate their heritage and traditions, make an immediate and valuable contribution to the building up of their country when they complete their studies, and feel free to put forward positive ideas for enhancing the situation in which they live.

I am anxious that the dignity of our women is protected, that they have full opportunity to participate in the various schemes of development, and that their right to bear children is respected. Social policies which do not afford to each couple the freedom to determine the size of their own family are not in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, nor do such policies evoke a co-operative response from the people of our country if their achievement is sought, as has so often been the case, by methods involving misinformation, deception, or downright intimidation.

I am also concerned that the policy of 'transmigration', which has hitherto been adopted by the Indonesian Government in East Timor, has led to further social tensions and disruption as the original inhabitants perceive their resources and livelihoods being taken from them to benefit others who have newly arrived on our island.

There is much more that could be said on these and other important matters which have a bearing on a peaceful outcome to the present sorry state of affairs. Let me conclude with a few brief remarks on the subject of **national defence and the arms industry** which is created to maintain it.

The Second Vatican Council recognised that:

War has decidedly not been eradicated from human affairs, and as long as the danger of it persists it will not be possible to deny governments the right of legitimate self defence ... rulers and others sharing the responsibility have the duty of looking to the safety of those in their charge.' (Gaudium et Spes Para 79)

But in this document, its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World Today, the Council goes on to stress that:

Military policy based on rightful defence is one thing, to want to subdue other nations is quite another. Nor does the possession of war potential make every military or political use of it lawful.

A later sentence reads, in respect of those who *'are weighed down by the cares of high office'*, that we should:

Earnestly ask God to give them strength to persevere with the brave work of making peace, which is the highest work of love ... Most certainly this demands that they stretch their mind and spirit beyond the boundaries of their own country, lay aside national egoism and the ambition to dominate others, and nourish a deep respect for all humanity, which is already struggling towards a greater unity. (Para 82)

Our small nation of East Timor has suffered much at the hands of military forces largely supplied with their armaments by Western countries such as the United States, and the United Kingdom. Their provision has given both practical and moral support for abuses that have taken place.

A third of our people, and many thousands of Indonesian troops, have died as a consequence of the pursuit of this conflict which would not have been possible without the continual arms supply.

In its 1994 Document 'The International Arms Trade - An Ethical Reflection' the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace states:

Arms can never be treated like ordinary commercial goods. Similarly no economic interest can of itself justify their production or transfer. Here also the law of profit cannot be supreme.

In the recent Catechism of the Catholic Church (1995) it is said that:

The production and the sale of arms affect the common good of nations and of the international community. Hence public authorities have the right and duty to regulate them. The short term pursuit of private or collective interests cannot legitimate undertakings that promote violence and conflict among nations and compromise the international juridical order. (Para 2316)

As a Bishop of this same Church, and as pastor in East Timor, whose people have suffered terribly from the effects of armaments made in countries far from our shores, I appeal to the Government of the United Kingdom, and to its allies - whose factories make a variety of weapons which are then sold for use on land, sea and in the air - to consider the dreadful consequences of this so-called 'defence industry'. Please, I beg you, restrict still further the conditions under which such trade is permitted. Do not sustain any longer a conflict which without these sales could never have been pursued in the first place, nor for so very long.

And to the all those individuals and agencies in Britain and elsewhere who have in one way or another taken practical action to bring about a reappraisal of arms manufacture and trade, and to question its morality, many thanks - from myself and from the people of East Timor.

I conclude, as I began, with sincere thanks to everyone who has made this short visit possible, and to all who have contributed in any way towards the present and future welfare of the East Timorese people. We continue to need all the help you can give. Together, and with good will to all, the **Time for Justice** will come.

Maromak hela ho imi ! (God bless you)